
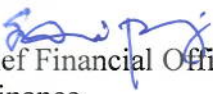


**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
311 WEST SARATOGA STREET
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201**

DATE: January 18, 2018

POLICY DIRECTIVE: SSA-CW # 18-7
(This policy directive supersedes and replaces policy directive SSA # 17-15)

TO: Directors, Local Departments of Social Services,
Assistant Directors and Foster Care Supervisors, Social
Services Finance Offices

FROM: Rebecca Jones Gaston, MSW 
Executive Director
Social Services Administration
Stafford Chipungu, Chief Financial Officer 
Office of Budget and Finance

RE: Differential Board Rates for Public Foster Care

PROGRAMS AFFECTED: Out-of-Home Placement Services (Foster Care Services)
And Resource Units

ORIGINATION OFFICE: Placement and Permanency Services

ACTION REQUIRED OF: All Local Departments, Child Welfare Service Staff

REQUIRED ACTION: Implement Policy and Procedures

ACTION DUE DATE: July 1, 2017

CONTACT PERSON: April Edwards, Supervisor
Placement and Permanency, Social Services Administration
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PURPOSE:

This Policy Directive provides guidelines for the payment of a differential board rate to public resource families in Maryland. Each year, Maryland launches vigorous resource parent recruitment efforts, with the goal of recruiting a sufficient number of resource families to address foster children needing placements. The District of Columbia (DC) has a large number of approved resource homes located in various counties in Maryland. The District of Columbia pays their public families a higher board rate than Maryland does; therefore a differential board rate supports the recruitment and retention of Maryland's public resource families.

BACKGROUND:

The board rate is set by DHS and applies to all resource providers. As a result of Supplemental Budget No. 1 to House Bill 150/Senate Bill 170 in the form of an amendment to the budget for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2018, resource providers were allotted a 2% increase in Foster Care Maintenance Payments intended to augment the board rate and per diem for the purpose of meeting the needs of children and youth in out-of-home placement.

Because the District of Columbia pays higher board rates for foster children than Maryland does, it is essential that Maryland remains competitive with their resource home recruitment and retention efforts in the counties surrounding Washington, District of Columbia. Recently, Maryland had been losing families to the District of Columbia. In certain jurisdictions, the District of Columbia foster care placements exceed the number of children in the local jurisdiction's custody. This creates a major barrier to the recruitment of sufficient numbers of public resource homes to accommodate Maryland's foster children needing placements.

DEFINITION

Differential board rates are defined as specific foster care board rates which exceed the standard Maryland Board Rates, for the purpose of maintaining adequate numbers of public resource families and to provide foster care services for foster children in specific Maryland jurisdictions.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The following criteria necessitate providing public resource families in a specific local jurisdiction with a differential board rate:

1. The number of children placed in a given county or Baltimore City from another state or the District of Columbia represents at least one-third (33%) of the total number of children in the custody of the given county or Baltimore City.
2. The majority of the "out-of-state children" are from a state or DC that pays higher board rates than Maryland's standard board rates.

QUALIFYING JURISDICTIONS

1. Prince George's and Charles Counties have been determined to be qualifying jurisdictions.
2. The regular differential board rate to be paid to resource families in Prince George's and Charles Counties, is \$892/month for children 0-11 years old and \$907/month for children 12 years and older.
3. The qualifying local departments do not receive the differential board rate if they have an approved TFC program.

DIFFERENTIAL BOARD RATES FY 18

| | Differential Per Diem | Monthly Clothing | Differential Monthly Board Rate |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <u>Regular Care Differential Rate</u> (Payment category 2173, 7173) | | | |
| ○ Infant through age 11 | \$29.33 | \$60 | \$892 |
| ○ Age 12 and older | \$29.82 | \$75 | \$907 |

Please note: The monthly clothing allowance is built into the monthly board rate, as is indicated in the **Foster Family Care FY 2018 Monthly Board Rate** chart. The **Foster Family Care FY 2018 Monthly Board Rate** chart reflects the minimum amount that resource parents shall spend monthly, when providing clothing for foster children/youth.

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY THE LOCAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES:

1. The local departments of social services (LDSS) shall keep accurate and up-to-date data regarding trends that would necessitate a differential board rate for a given jurisdiction and report the need for a differential board rate to the Social Services Administration (SSA), if it is determined that the criteria applies.
2. The LDSS shall conduct yearly reassessments of the need for modification to the jurisdiction's Differential Board Rates.
3. The LDSS shall make payments to public resource parents at the amount identified by SSA.

4. If children from other jurisdictions are placed with a public foster family in a county where differential board rates are in effect, the placing county will be responsible for paying the differential board rates that apply.

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY THE SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION:

- Conduct statewide assessments to determine a local jurisdiction's eligibility to receive a differential board rate;
- Provide assistance to local jurisdictions with tracking and monitoring;
- Provide support, assistance and advocacy; and
- Identify the exact amount to be paid based on a review of the board rate in the identified state and communicate the findings.